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CELEBRATING HOLIDAYS

Diwali

by Rachel Grack

BLASTOFF! READERS 2

BELLWETHER MEDIA • MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Note to Librarians, Teachers, and Parents:

Blastoff! Readers are carefully developed by literacy experts and combine standards-based content with developmentally appropriate text.

Level 1 provides the most support through repetition of high-frequency words, light text, predictable sentence patterns, and strong visual support.

Level 2 offers early readers a bit more challenge through varied simple sentences, increased text load, and less repetition of high-frequency words.

Level 3 advances early-fluent readers toward fluency through increased text and concept load, less reliance on visuals, longer sentences, and more literary language.

Level 4 builds reading stamina by providing more text per page, increased use of punctuation, greater variation in sentence patterns, and increasingly challenging vocabulary.

Level 5 encourages children to move from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" by providing even more text, varied writing styles, and less familiar topics.

Whichever book is right for your reader, Blastoff! Readers are the perfect books to build confidence and encourage a love of reading that will last a lifetime!

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Diwali Is Here!

Fireworks explode in the night sky. Children wave **sparklers** in the streets below.

Mumbai, India

India is bright with light and color. It is Diwali!

What Is Diwali?

Diwali is the biggest holiday in India. It is often called the **Festival** of Lights.

For the celebration, people light rows of clay lamps called *diyas*.

How Do You Say?

Word	Pronunciation
Diwali	dee-WAH-lee
diya	DEE-yah
Lakshmi	LAHK-shmee
puja	POO-jah
rangoli	rahn-GO-lee

Who Celebrates Diwali?

Diwali is a **Hindu** holiday. However, it has spread to other faiths.

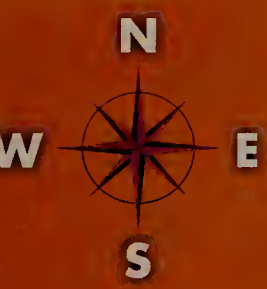
Hindu Diwali celebration

Around the world, people celebrate the power of good over evil during Diwali.

Diwali Beginnings

Diwali started as a **harvest** festival in India. Farmers gave thanks for their crops.

They wanted the Hindu **goddess** of wealth, Lakshmi, to bless them.



Lakshmi

Today, people also remember other **gods** and goddesses during Diwali.

Many tell the story of Rama.
He saved his wife and kingdom
from a **demon** called Ravana.

Time to Celebrate

Diwali lasts for five days in October or November.

The dates change with the Hindu calendar. They depend on the position of the moon.

Taj Mahal
in Agra, India

Diwali Traditions!

People clean their homes for Diwali. They open their windows and doors to welcome Lakshmi.

They light lamps to keep evil away.

People decorate floors and pavement with *rangoli* art. These beautiful designs are often made of colored sand. People also hang flower **garlands** in doorways.

Make a Rangoli Lotus

People often show lotus flowers in their rangoli art. In India, the lotus stands for beauty and life.

What You Need:

- piece of cardstock paper
- pencil or marker
- glue
- colored sand

What You Do:

1. Use the example below to draw a lotus flower on cardstock paper.
2. Trace the lines in glue.
3. Sprinkle colored sand on the glue. Let dry.
4. Tap the picture over a garbage can to get rid of loose sand.

For many people, *puja*, or **worship**, is a **tradition**.

Families also gather to share sweet treats and gifts. Some gatherings have dancing. Diwali is a joyful celebration!

Glossary

demon—an evil spirit

festival—celebration

garlands—long strings of flowers used for decoration

goddess—a female god

gods—holy and supernatural beings

harvest—a time to gather crops

Hindu—related to Hinduism, a religion practiced in India and other parts of the world

sparklers—fireworks that people hold

tradition—a custom, idea, or belief handed down from one generation to the next

worship—to show respect and love for a god

To Learn More

AT THE LIBRARY

Amstutz, Lisa J. *Diwali.* Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2017.

Murray, Julie. *Diwali.* Edina, Minn.: ABDO Publishing Company, 2014.

Ponto, Joanna, and Michelle Parker-Rock. *Diwali.* New York, N.Y.: Enslow Pub., 2016.

ON THE WEB

Learning more about Diwali is as easy as 1, 2, 3.

1. Go to www.factsurfer.com.
2. Enter "Diwali" into the search box.
3. Click the "Surf" button and you will see a list of related web sites.

With factsurfer.com, finding more information is just a click away.

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